

National Resource Centers and
Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships

ASIA

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Abstracts
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Michigan State University Asian Studies Center

The Asian Studies Center (ASN) at Michigan State University (MSU) directs one of the largest, most diverse programs of education about Asia in the Midwest. Unlike comparable programs, ASN's is distinguished by its *comprehensive* attention to East, South, and Southeast Asia in the design of its curriculum, focus of faculty research, and scope of outreach activities. Presently, the Center's ninety-one affiliated faculty represent disciplines from across the curriculum in teaching undergraduate and graduate students. To enhance ASN's existing strengths in East Asia-related activities and recent initiatives in teaching, faculty improvement, and community service pertaining to South and Southeast Asia, this proposal requests that ASN be designated an *all-Asia* undergraduate national resource center.

ASN began as Michigan State University's academic center for developing and coordinating Asia-related programs in 1962. During the Center's first decades, Asian studies centered on students and faculty working in the East Asia regional area. From the 1960s to the 1980s, ASN's accomplishments received wide recognition and funding from the Social Science Research Council, the Luce Foundation, The Japan Foundation, The Korea Foundation, the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation, and other agencies.

In recent years, the Center has undergone a major transition as the curriculum, faculty research, exchange programs, and outreach have developed to embrace programs in places as diverse as India and Indonesia, Korea and Nepal. Emblematic of this development is the growth of MSU's overseas linkages from 46 locations throughout Asia in 1996 to 98 today. Equally significant is the university's new emphasis on supporting "less commonly taught languages" (LCTLs), a program that will provide on-demand instruction in Nepali, Hindi, Korean, Tagalog, and others preparatory to integrating these into the regular curriculum.

ASN's shift toward an all-Asia emphasis reflects the university's growing internationalization. Two-thirds of MSU's foreign students and a majority of the university's 600 foreign scholars come from Asia and nearly 2,000 undergraduates are Asian-Pacific Americans. The changing domestic demographics and the increase in students and scholars from Asia have created demands for an Asian Studies curriculum relevant to new needs and experiences reflecting the university's genuinely multi-cultural quality.

The "pull" of faculty initiatives to broaden the Asia-related curriculum has accompanied the demographic "push" toward a more comprehensive Asian Studies program, one that includes the following programmatic strengths:

- More than 90 Asian Studies faculty members in arts and letters, social science, sciences, and professional schools;
- an Asian Studies Certificate Program for undergraduate students that provides a rigorous and rich curriculum in disciplinary and language courses;
- full undergraduate programs in Chinese and Japanese languages and courses in MSU's Evening college on Korean, Hindi, Tagalog among others;
- the largest study abroad program at any U.S. university;
- curricular enrichment through symposia, conferences, concerts, exhibitions, and film series open to all;
- an Asia Library collection that includes more than 200,000 titles and access through the Michigan Research Libraries Triangle to other rich Asia collections;
- strong university support from the President and Provost who have made internationalizing the curriculum through cross-disciplinary, cross-regional, and new language programs a priority;
- a vibrant Asian studies outreach program, that works energetically in assisting K-12 teachers and supplies programs and information about Asia to K-12 schools, two and four-year colleges, and Michigan's business and government communities.

